PARISH OF THE ASCENSION HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY
(CHURCHES OF ST AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY and ST GILES, and ST LUKE's LEP[1])

§1. *Policy Statement*

The Parochial Church Council (hereafter the PCC) as occupier of the premises (St Augustine's, St Giles' and St Luke's Churches) will ensure, in so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of any employees, voluntary workers, members of the congregation, licensed users of church premises and members of the public, as well as all persons contracted to carry out work on church premises, in discharge of their general duty of care under the Health & Safety at Work (HASAW) Act 1974 (as amended) and of obligations under specific relevant Regulations made under the Act.

§2. *Procedures*

Within the general policy stated above in §1, the PCC recognises that they have the following specific duties and responsibilities:

- to ensure that any plant or equipment, buildings, other structures and open ground are, as far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health or liable to cause physical injury;
- to ensure that, as far is reasonably practicable, there are no risks to health in connection with the use, handling and storage of equipment or other articles and substances on their premises;
- to maintain the premises in a condition which is safe and without risks to health, including safe means of access to and exit from the premises;
- to provide adequate information, instruction, training and supervision where necessary to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of employees, volunteer workers, licensed users, hirers, borrowers and contractors;
- to maintain a safe system of work for contractors by ensuring that such work is supervised and that permission to conduct the work is given explicitly taking into account any potential risks.

§3. *General Duty of Care*

Anyone (such as visitors, members of the public or congregation, licensed users together with the people they are responsible for, voluntary workers and clergy) on the premises of St Augustine's, St Giles' or St Luke's, including all areas within the boundaries (wall, fence or other), have a general duty of care under Health and Safety legislation to ensure that their actions or omissions do not endanger the health or safety of other people.

§4. *Implementation*

- Day to day implementation of the policy shall be delegated to those persons appointed to the role of Churchwarden for each church, although the overall responsibility for ensuring that the policy is adhered to remains with the PCC.
- The PCC will ensure, through their authority delegated to the Churchwardens, that:
    - all licensed users, those hiring or borrowing Church facilities or equipment, as well as contractors, are provided with a printed or electronic copy of the PCC's Health and Safety Policy and Procedures;

[1] Local Ecumenical Partnership (United Reformed Church with Church of England)

    - all employees, clergy, voluntary workers, members of the congregation, licensed users and contractors report incidents and accidents, including near-misses, relating to health, safety and welfare and complete the accident and incident log-book as required under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995;
    - the accident and incident log-book is reviewed on a regular basis, at least at every formal meeting of the appropriate District Church Council (hereafter DCC) or St Luke's Ecumenical Church Council (ECC), and that any weaknesses in health and safety are identified and rectified as soon as is practicable;
    - necessary risk assessments are carried out on church-related or church-initiated activities and that licensed users are informed of their obligations to carry out their own risk assessment for activities for which they are responsible;
    - risk assessments should follow the requirements of the Health & Safety Executive publication HSG(65), namely (i) hazards should be identified, (ii) the risk posed by any hazard should be assessed, whether potential or actual, together with the group at risk, (iii) measures to eliminate, control or protect from the risk should be introduced, (iv) monitoring and auditing procedures should be in place to ensure that any measures taken are effective;
    - risk assessments should be recorded in writing and filed for further reference;
    - all contractor procedure statements and health and safety policies are reviewed prior to work beginning;
    - all employees, volunteer workers, licensed workers, hirers and borrowers of church equipment or facilities, as well as contractors, are provided with a written copy of the PCC's health and safety policy and procedures including the user manual;
    - the effectiveness of the PCC's health and safety policy is assessed regularly and any necessary remedial action taken.
- Employers, voluntary workers and licensed users will:
    - cooperate with the PCC, Churchwardens, DCCs and/or ECC on all matters relating to health, safety and welfare;
    - take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of any persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions, thus exercising a general duty of care as required by legislation.
- Licensed users, hirers and borrowers of church equipment or facilities
    - When church premises are not being used under the direction of the Ministry Team, a Churchwarden or other member of the PCC or relevant DCC or ECC, the principal person hiring, borrowing or using facilities (for example, the kitchens) or any part of the premises under license, will be responsible for ensuring safe practices, including an assessment of risk, and for ensuring that all activities and usages comply with the PCC's health and safety requirements and policies as well as all statutory obligations under UK law such as a general duty of care.
- Contractors must:
    - follow the requirements of the PCC's Health and Safety policy and procedures;
    - adhere to the rules stated on the Contractors' Safety Sheet;
    - obtain written permission or signed authorisation from a responsible representative of the PCC (usually a Churchwarden or member of the Ministry Team) before starting work.

This policy is reviewed annually. Policy adopted: 22nd November 2016. Last approved: 20 February 2025. Next review date: February 2028.